

For the Children

OLD SKIDDLE-DE-WINK.

By Herbert Randall.

Old Skiddle-de-Wink went, blinkety-blink,
And he couldn't see a mite;
Yet what do you think! Old Skiddle-de-Wink
Had a most remarkable sight.

Old Skiddle-de-Wink lived up in a tree,
Away in its topmost height;
And solemnly there, with a wild, wild stare,
He sat from morning till night.

And then—what a surprise!—with his magical eyes
That funny old owl could see;
And, I rather think, Mr. Skiddle-de-Wink
Was as happy, as happy as could be.

When I was a boy, a wee little boy,
I went in the woods one day,
When the sun was low, just so I could know
What Skiddle-de-Wink would say.

He spread out his wings and went flopping about,
Till he lit on an old dead tree;
And what do you think! with his comical wink
He talked in this way to me:

"'Tis time little children were snug in their beds;
Now run along home—Booh! Booh!"
I ventured to ask him, "Who is it you mean?"
He answered me, "Whoo! Yoo, Yooo!"

And if you went into the woods tonight,
As I when a boy used to do,
Old Skiddle-de-Wink, with his blinkety-blink,
Would talk the same way to you.

—The Owl.

THE STORY OF THE WEE HARE AND THE RED FIRE IN SHORT WORDS.

A. L. Sykes in April St. Nicholas.

One day in the cold time when he lay snug and warm by his mamma, Tiny Hare said: "Tell me of the hare who went step, step, step in the snow till he came to the red fire."

So his mamma gave him a hug and said:

"Once upon a time was a wise wee hare who knew how to run fast when Man came by. He knew how to hide when the Dog was near, and when he saw the dark spot in the sky that Hawk made, how fast he did jump to his mamma! But Wee Hare did not like to go out and run and jump and play in the sun.

"I do not want to run and jump and play in the sun. I want to run far, far in the wood, and find the red bush. I have seen it away off in the dark. It is good for me to eat, I know."

"It is fire," said his mamma. "Only man can make it, and it is not good for you. It can burn and hurt. You may eat the good food that you can find near our home," and she bit his ear for a kiss.

"I do not want to eat the good food that I can see here. I want to do just as I like. I want to pick the red food from the red bush. I know it is like buds in the warm time."

"Hush," said Papa Hare, very low and deep. "You are not good. When you are good, and the moon is high in the sky, and it is just like day, I will take you far out in the wood, and you may run and jump and eat the food that is best for you."

"I do not want to go out in the wood and run and jump and play when the moon is high in the sky. I want to do just as I like. I want to eat the red buds from the red bush," said the Wee Hare.

"Shut your eyes and put your ears down and take your nap," said his mamma. "You are too tiny to go away from me. Now, hush, do not say one more word. The red bush is the Red Fire. It can hurt and burn. Man has it, and Dog is with Man. They can hurt you, and if you run far in the wood, Wind may blow too hard for a wee hare, and Snow may come and bury you. Shut your eyes and put your ears down and take your nap."

It was noon; the sun was high in the sky.

Good Papa Hare took his nap, and Mama Hare took her nap. The Wee Hare shut his eyes and put his ears down but he took no nap. By and by he went out of the door, and ran and ran till he came to the wood. Then he ran and ran in the wood, but he did not come to the Red Fire, and he ran and ran and ran till his feet were sore, but he did not come to the Red Fire, and he ran and ran and ran and ran till he was not able to run any more, and no Red Fire did he see. He lay down to rest in a bush, and very soon his eyes were shut, and he did not see or hear, for it was long past the hour for his nap. When he woke Snow lay on all the open ways of the wood. The Wee Hare gave a leap from his bush, for he knew that Snow can grow deep and deep, and a wee hare can not walk in it. How he did wish he was at home!

The sun was far down in the west, and its last rays lay red on the snow. Step, step, step went the lame wee hare in the cold snow. He went back into the wood to try to find his way home. It grew gray, and it grew dark, and snow grew so deep that the wee hare had hard work to walk. Then wind came. It was so cold, and blew him out of the path, and how he did wish he was at home! Step, step, step in the snow he went. The wind blew more and more.

"I cannot walk; my feet are too lame," said the Wee Hare, and just then he saw the Red Fire! It grew in the path in the wood, and by it sat Man and Dog. Oh, how the Wee Hare felt! His nose grew hot, and his ears grew cold, and he was not able to move. The Dog said: "Wow!" and he put his ears up, but Man said: "Lie down," and Dog lay down by the Red Fire. The Wee Hare went into a tiny, tiny hole in a tree and sat on his feet to warm them. He saw the Red Fire. He did not like to see it. Man and Dog did not let it come too near them, and he saw them keep away from the Red Fire.

"They fear it, too," said the Wee Hare. "It is not good for me. I must take care or it will come and hurt me." He sat on his cold feet, and did not dare to take a nap.

By and by Man put Snow over the Red Fire, and he and Dog went away, and the Wee Hare went step, step, step in the snow, soft, soft, soft, for fear.